

The Baptistry of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem and the Politics of Sacred Landscape

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The Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, founded by Emperor Constantine the Great, is a much venerated and much studied building. Archaeologists and scholars have devoted considerable attention to the form, construction phases, and meanings of the Rotunda of the Anastasis and the basilical Martyrium. However, one important part of the complex, the baptistry, has received only peripheral treatment. It has been assumed that the baptistry was part of the Constantinian foundation, although the implications of such an assumption have not been explored. Scholarly debate has focused on the location of the baptistry. Arguments on the siting of this hall of initiation have depended exclusively on internal evidence. In contrast, I hope to show that the collation of the material remains and literary record of the Holy Sepulcher with evidence for the architectural setting of baptism elsewhere in the empire reveals not only the historical anomalies produced by the current interpretation of the archaeological record, but also something of the original ideological significance of the monument. I argue that the character of Constantine's patronage of the early Christian church and the politics of ritual spectacle in the late antique city are disclosed both in the building of the Holy Sepulcher and in the historical presentation of the discovery and veneration of Jesus' tomb and cross.

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I. LOCATING THE BAPTISTRY: STATE OF THE QUESTION

The form of the Holy Sepulcher, as it existed in the second half of the fourth century, may be reconstructed on the basis of excavations, surviving fragments, and texts (Fig. 1). The atrium of the complex was entered from the colonnaded main street, the *cardo maximus*, to the east; farther to the west was a five-aisled basilica known as Constantine's church or the Martyrium; behind the apse at the west end of the basilica lay another open courtyard; terminating the procession of buildings was the Rotunda of the Anastasis or Resurrection, built over the cave identified as the empty tomb of Jesus. An outcrop at the west end of the south aisle of the Martyrium was identified as Calvary or Golgotha, the site of the crucifixion. To the north of the courtyard and Rotunda were administrative quarters. Although literary references indicate that the Constantinian complex also included a baptistry, there is no indisputable archaeological evidence for either its specific location or its form. Excavations carried out in the vicinity of the Rotunda, the Martyrium, and the area to the north of the complex have failed to uncover compelling evidence of its existence. Nevertheless, in the only article exclusively devoted to the baptistry, C. Tinelli argues for a site to the north of the Rotunda.¹

Tinelli bases his case for the site of the baptistry in part on the presence of a marble basin in the patriarchal apartments to the north of the Rotunda. Visitors have noted the presence of this abandoned font since the sixteenth century; it was removed by V. Corbo in 1961 for restoration (Fig.

¹C. Tinelli, "Il battistero del S. Sepolcro in Gerusalemme," *Liber Annuus* 23 (1973), 95–104.

2).² Tinelli acknowledges that the basin is not in its original context. Now badly fractured, the piscina was once a monolith, square on the outside (its sides are approximately 110 cm in length) within which a quatrefoil basin was carved (its approximate depth is 60 cm) (Fig. 3). Tinelli argues that such a large and heavy piece is unlikely to have been moved far from its original setting. Therefore, the original baptistery must have been located to the north of the Rotunda within the complex's administrative space. Tinelli finds support for his hypothetical location of the first baptistery in an inscription from Ps. 28:3 in one of the cisterns below the northern range of subsidiary structures. It reads: ΦΩΝΗ Κ(υό)Υ ΕΠΙ ΤΩΝ ΥΔΑΤΩΝ, or, "The voice of the Lord is upon the waters."³ Tinelli associates the use of this phrase in Jerusalem exclusively with the baptismal liturgy, and thus links the cistern to a baptismal hall.

In the latest monograph on the Holy Sepulcher, Corbo follows Tinelli in siting the baptistery to the north of the Rotunda, adding a more detailed discussion of the drainage system and cisterns in that area.⁴ Further, on the basis of a fragmentary floral mosaic and a surviving threshold, Corbo offers a definition of the space occupied by the projected baptistery—an enclosure within the reconstructed open court of the ecclesiastical apartments abutting the external west wall of the north conch of the Rotunda. Neither Tinelli nor Corbo, however, offers a graphic reconstruction of the baptismal hall that they propose.

Tinelli and Corbo's arguments raise several questions. They assume that the surviving basin is the baptismal font of the early Christian complex. There is, however, no documentation for the date of the piece. Works of a similar shape and quality tend to appear somewhat later, in the fifth and

sixth centuries. For example, the piscina of 597 in the basilica of the prophet Moses on Mount Nebo replaced an earlier, larger cruciform font.⁵ Moreover, since the basin in the Holy Sepulcher complex is smaller and shallower than the surviving fourth-century fonts of other major foundations, it is difficult to imagine how it could have met the ritual needs of the prestigious church of Constantinian Jerusalem. In any case, it seems possible that this font was a later addition or that it was transported to its site north of the Rotunda for reuse in some capacity, ritual or nonritual.

Further, the drainage system recorded by Corbo is similar to that found in domestic and public contexts throughout the late Roman world.⁶ The evidence does not allow the reconstruction of the complex hydraulics of baptism of the sort found, for example, in the excavations of San Giovanni alle Fonti in Milan.⁷ And again, the inscription from Psalm 28:3 in one of the cisterns in the court, which Tinelli cites as evidence for the location of the baptistery, does not occur in the earliest accounts of the baptismal ritual in Jerusalem. In the later typikon of the Great Church of Constantinople, Psalm 28:3 is read at Epiphany, appropriately associated with the Blessing of the Waters.⁸ This rite sanctified water for domestic as well as lustral use, as John Chrysostom (ca. 350–407) makes clear to his congregation in Antioch:

About midnight of this feast [of Epiphany], let all draw water and carry it into their houses, where it may be stored up all year, because on this day water is sanctified. And then it appears as a public miracle, that this water, in spite of the length of time elapsed, is not corrupted, but remains fresh for one, two, and often three years, equal in purity to freshly drawn water.⁹

Psalm 28:3, as an allusion to the Blessing of the Waters, might then be appropriate in a cistern

²E.g., Bernadino Amico, *Trattato delle piante et immagini dei sacri edifici di Terra Santa* (Rome, 1609), trans. T. Bellorini and E. Hoade, *Plans of the Sacred Edifices of the Holy Land*, Studium Biblicum Franciscanum 10 (Jerusalem, 1953), xxii, 24, in which the spot is labeled "fonte de Greci." For other references, Tinelli, "Il battistero," 95–98. For Corbo's removal of the object in 1961, V. C. Corbo, "Gli edifici della Santa Anastasis a Gerusalemme," *Liber Annuus* 12 (1962), 221–316, esp. 266–68.

³J. Germer-Durand, "Epigraphie chrétienne de Jérusalem," *RevBibl* 1 (1892), 586.

⁴V. C. Corbo, "Problemi sul Santo Sepolcro di Gerusalemme in una recente pubblicazione," *Liber Annuus* 29 (1979), 279–92; Idem, *Il Santo Sepolcro di Gerusalemme. Aspetti archeologici dalle origini al periodo crociato*, Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, collectio maior 29 (Jerusalem, 1981), 132–34. For work carried out since Corbo's monograph, idem, "Il Santo Sepolcro di Gerusalemme. *Nova et Vetera*," *Liber Annuus* 38 (1988), 59–66.

⁵For the 6th-century font, S. J. Saller, *The Memorial of Moses on Mount Nebo*, 3 vols., Studium Biblicum Franciscanum 1 (Jerusalem, 1941), I, esp. 84–91, 246–51. For the earlier baptistery, M. Piccirillo, "Campagna archeologica nella basilica di Mosé profeta sul Nebo-Siyagha," *Liber Annuus* 26 (1976), 281–318, esp. 298–99.

⁶The conduits under the Chapel of San Aquilino in Milan have similarly been identified as simply drainage pipes. D. Kinney, "Capella Reginae: S. Aquilino in Milan," *Marsyas* 15 (1970–71), 13–35, esp. 23–24.

⁷M. Mirabella Roberti and A. Paredi, *Il battistero Ambrosiano di San Giovanni alle Fonti* (Milan, 1974), plan facing p. 22.

⁸J. Mateos, *Le Typicon de la Grande Eglise*, 2 vols., OCA 166 (Rome, 1963), I, 186.16, 2, 182.7–8.

⁹Chrysostom, *De baptismo Christi*, PG 49, col. 366; trans. in C. Baur and M. Gonzaga, *John Chrysostom and His Time*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Westminster, Md., 1959–60), I, 199.

holding water for a variety of liturgical purposes, not just baptism.

The baptistery's literary record is no less ambiguous than its archaeological one.¹⁰ In the one elaborate ekphrasis or description of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher surviving from the fourth century—written shortly after 337 by Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, as part of his *Life of Constantine*—no mention is made either of the baptistery or the Rotunda of the Anastasis.¹¹ The baptistery is alluded to, however, in the earliest surviving account of a pilgrim's journey to the Holy Land, written in 333 by an anonymous traveler from Bordeaux:

To the left is the hill of Golgotha, where the lord was crucified. About a stone's throw away is the crypt, where his body was laid and, after three days, resurrected. There now, at the order of the emperor Constantine, was built a basilica, that is a church, of wonderful beauty, having to the side pools from which water is raised, and a bath behind, in which the newly born [*infantes*] are washed.¹²

Although the *infantes* in this passage is often translated as "children,"¹³ it may be noted that the innocence of all baptizands is often alluded to in early texts by referring to them as "children," *infantes*.¹⁴ In Jerusalem, as elsewhere in the early

Christian world, the baptismal rite was addressed principally, if not exclusively, to adults.¹⁵

Significant references to baptism at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher are made in three other sources of the fourth and fifth centuries. St. Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem between ca. 349 and 386, describes the initiation ritual in some detail in his catechetical lectures:

First you have entered into the vestibule of the house of baptism, and there facing to the West, . . . as in the presence of Satan, you renounce him. . . . When you had renounced Satan . . . there is opened to you God's paradise, which he planted to the East; and a symbol of this was your turning from West to East, the place of light. And you were taught to say, "I believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost, and in one baptism of repentance." . . . And these things were done in the outer chamber. . . . As soon as you entered [into the inner chamber] you put off your tunic. . . . Then you were stripped, you were anointed with exorcized oil from the hair of your head to your feet, and were made partakers of the good olive tree, Jesus Christ. . . . After that, you have been brought to the holy pool of divine baptism, as Christ from the cross was carried to his tomb which is before our eyes.¹⁶

The pilgrim Egeria, whose account is dated between 383 and 385, made a careful record of the liturgical practices of Jerusalem, including its baptismal rites.¹⁷

There is no service, however, at the ninth hour on Saturday, for preparation is being made for the Easter vigil in the major church, the Martyrium. The Easter vigil is observed here exactly as we observe it at home. Only one thing is done more elaborately here. After the neophytes have been baptized and dressed as soon as they came forth from the baptismal font, they are led first of all to the Anastasis with the bishop. The bishop goes within the railings of the Anastasis, a hymn is sung, and he prays for them. Then he returns with them to the major church, where all the people are holding the vigil as is customary.¹⁸

The procession from the baptistery to the Anastasis and the Martyrium is again mentioned in the

¹⁰For collections of texts relevant to the Holy Sepulcher, see H. Vincent and F.-M. Abel, *Jérusalem nouvelle*, vol. 2, *Jérusalem. Recherches de topographie, d'archéologie et d'histoire* (Paris, 1914); E. K. H. Wistrand, *Konstantins Kirche am Heiligen Grab nach den ältesten literarischen Zeugnissen*, Göteborgs Högskolas Årsskrift 58 (Göteborg, 1952); D. Baldi, *Enchiridion Locorum Sanctorum* (Jerusalem, 1955; repr. 1982), 617–705; J. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades* (Warminster, 1977).

¹¹Eusebius of Caesarea, *Vita Constantini*, ed. F. Winkelmann, GCS 7, Eusebius I.1 (Berlin, 1975), iii, 25–40, 92.24–101.6. A new translation of Eusebius' *Life of Constantine* is being prepared by A. Cameron. For a discussion of Eusebius' presentation of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, see J. G. Davies, "Eusebius' Description of the Martyrium at Jerusalem," *AJA* 61 (1957), 171–73.

¹²"A sinistra autem parte est monticulus Golgotha, ubi Dominus crucifixus est. Inde quasi ad lapidem missum est cripta, ubi corpus eius positum fuit et tertia die resurrexit; ibidem modo iussu Constantini imperatoris basilica facta est, id est domini-cum, mirae pulchritudinis habens ad latus excepturia, unde aqua leuatur, et balneum a tergo, ubi infantes lauantur." *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, ed. P. Geyer and O. Cuntz, in *Itineraria et alia geographica*, CCL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 1–26, esp. 593.4–594.4.

¹³John Wilkinson has translated the passage: "[The basilica (i.e., the Martyrium)] has beside it cisterns of remarkable beauty, and beside [behind] them a bath where children are baptized." *Egeria's Travels to the Holy Land* (Jerusalem, 1981), 158–59.

¹⁴For example, *Itinerarium Egeriae*, ed. E. Franceschini and R. Weber, in *Itineraria et alia geographica*, 38.1.

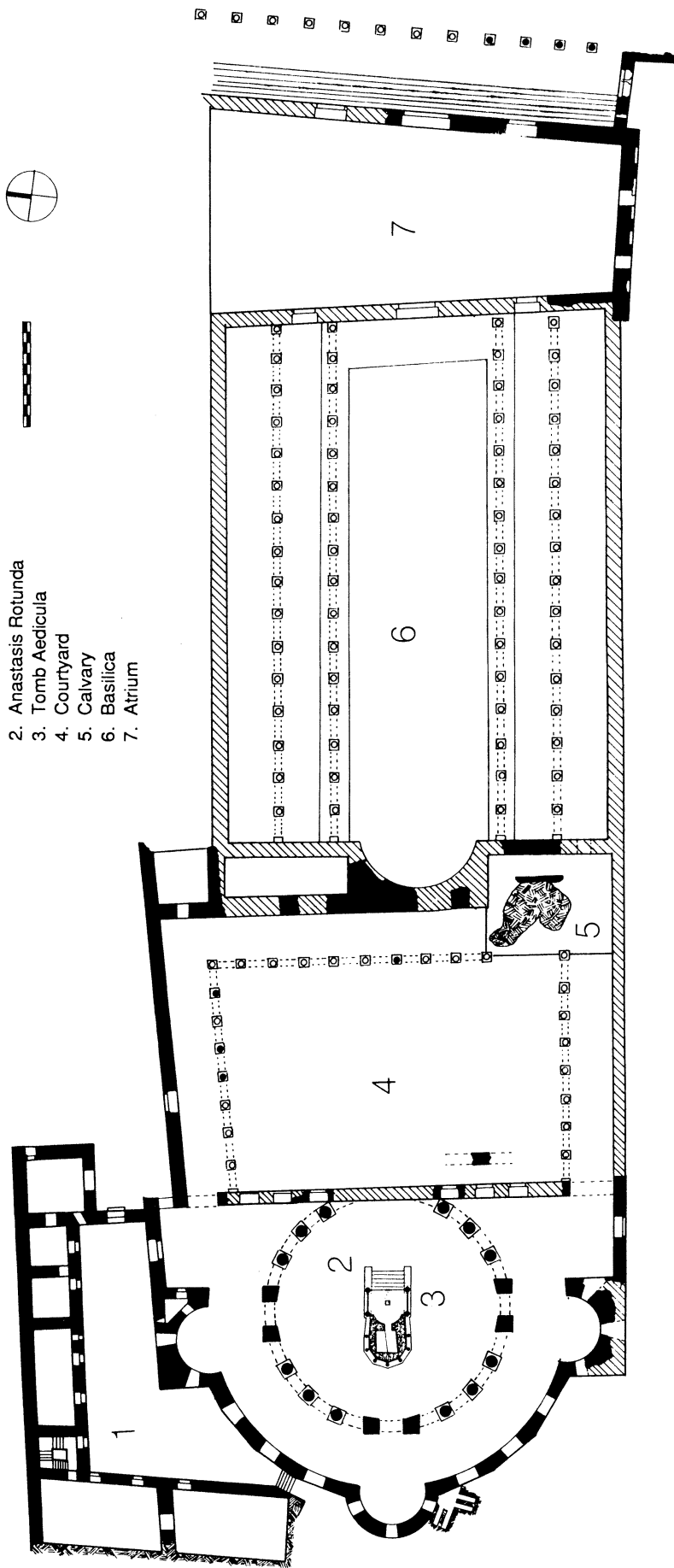
¹⁵In the later 4th and early 5th centuries, adult baptism continued to be dominant, though infant baptism, known from the earliest Christian times, seems to have become increasingly popular. See J. Jeremias, *Die Kindertaufe in den ersten vier Jahrhunderten* (Göttingen, 1958).

¹⁶Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis de Baptismo*, PG 33, cols. 1068–80.

¹⁷For the date of Egeria's visit, P. Devos, "La date du voyage d'Egérie," *AnalBoll* 85 (1967), 165–94; for some of the architectural implications of this date, E. Clark, *The Life of Melania the Younger* (New York, 1984), 220–21.

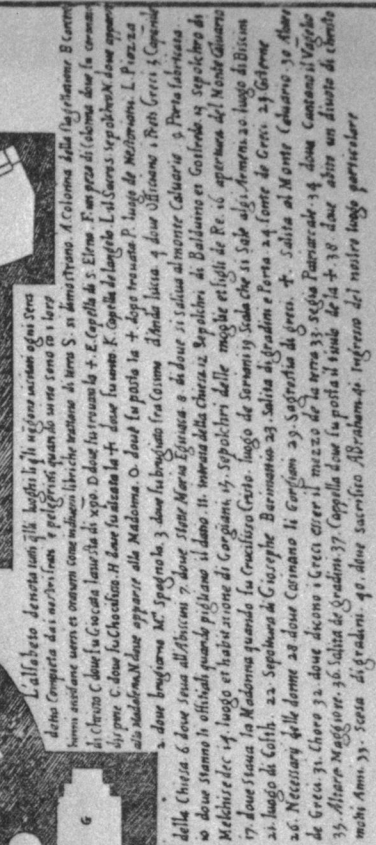
¹⁸*Itinerarium Egeriae*, 38, 82.2–11; trans. by G. E. Gingras, *Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrimage*, Ancient Christian Writers 38 (New York, 1970), 114.

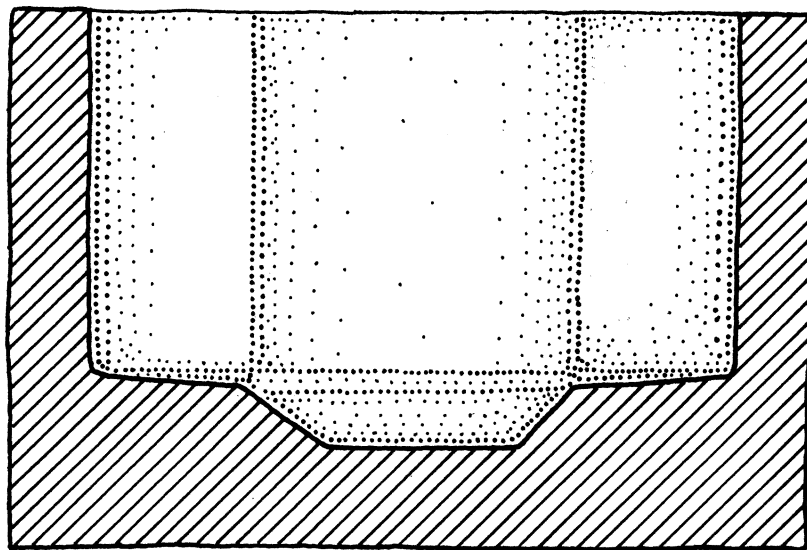
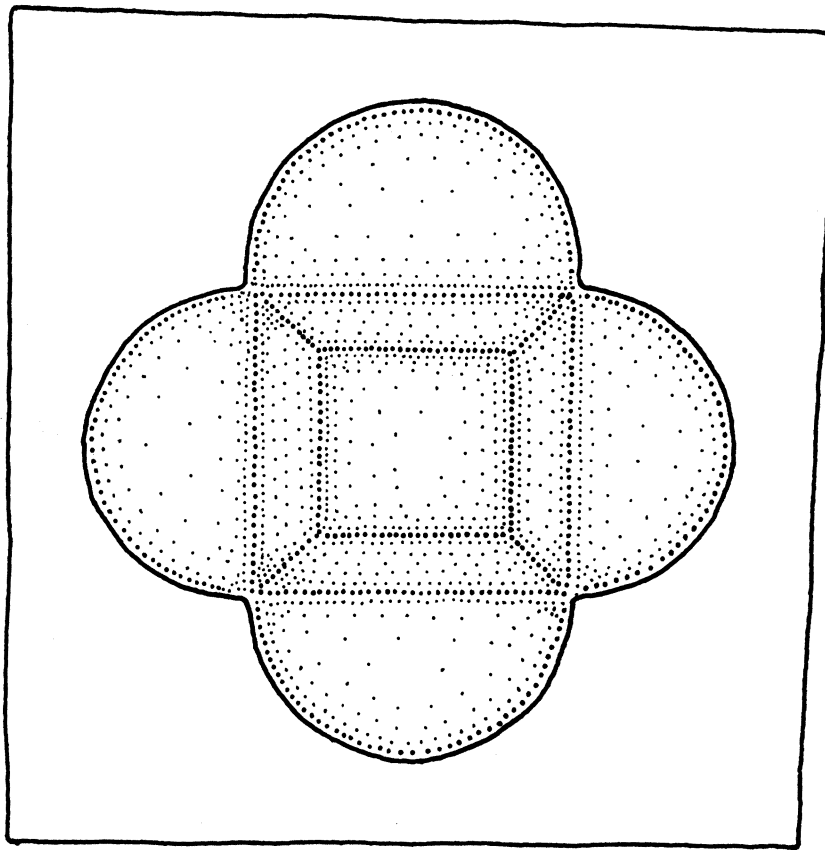
1. Patriarchate
2. Anastasis Rotunda
3. Tomb Aedicula
4. Courtyard
5. Calvary
6. Basilica
7. Atrium



1 Jerusalem, Holy Sepulcher, reconstructed plan of the complex with no indication of the baptistery's location
(redrawn by R. Oosterhout after Corbo)

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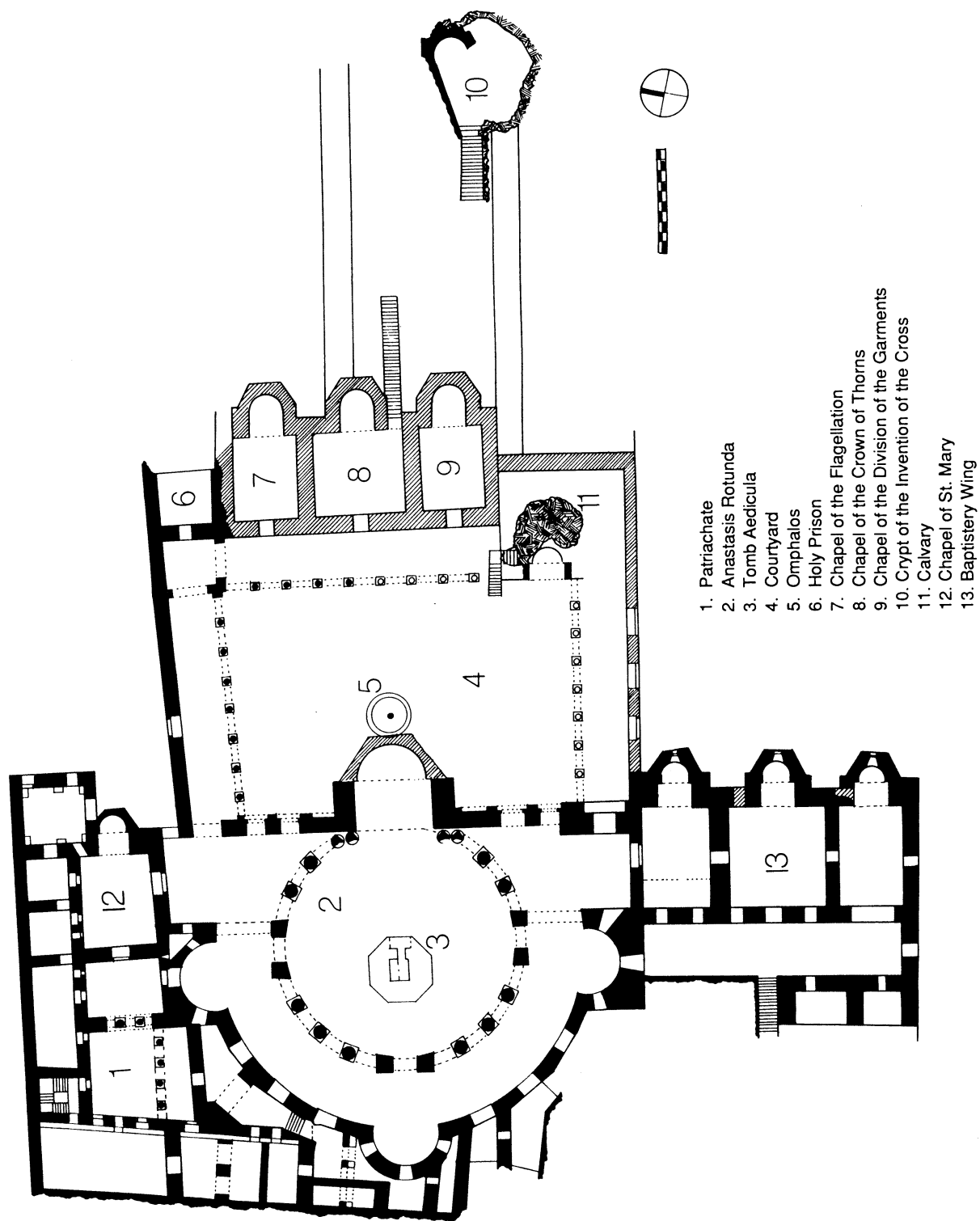




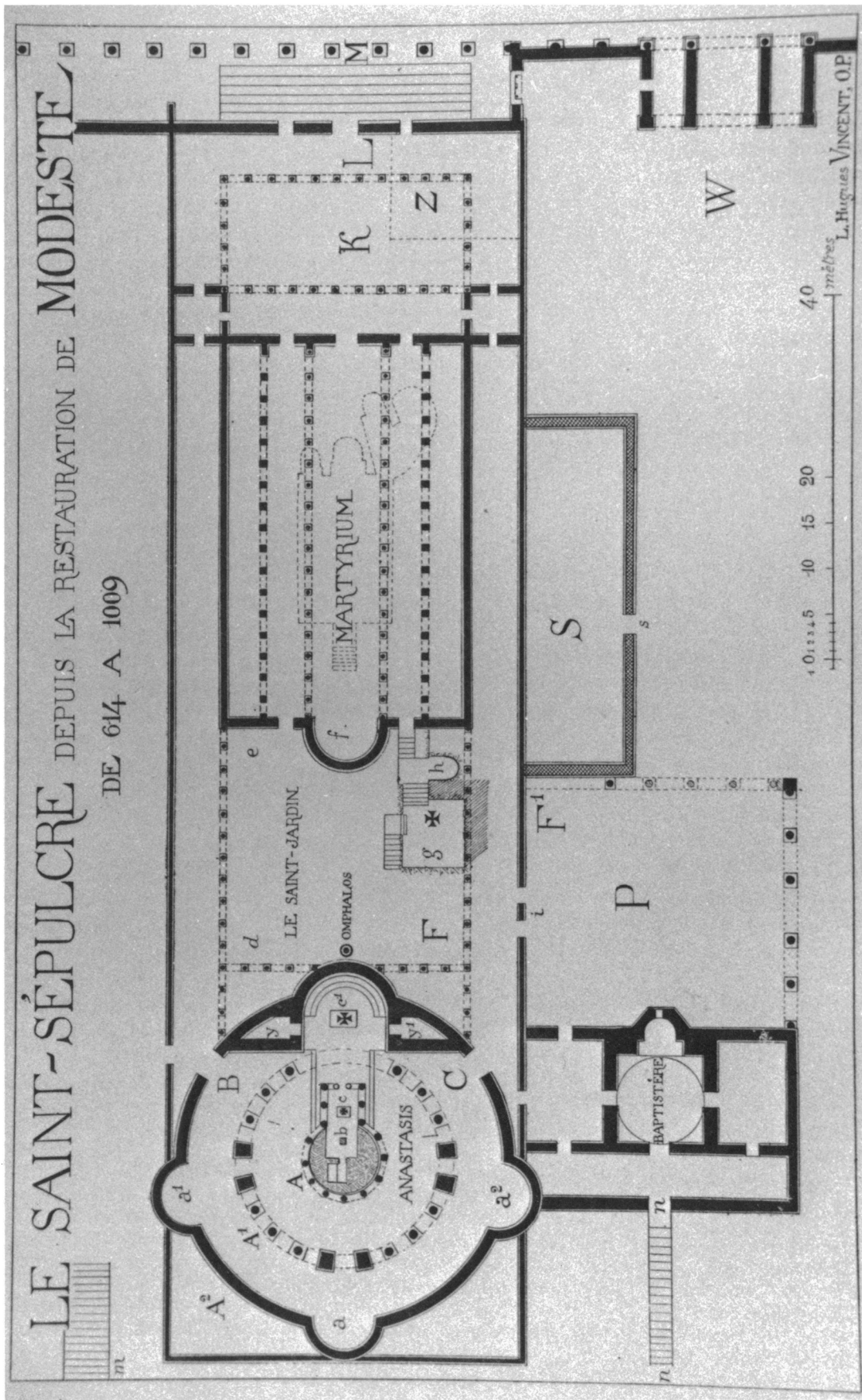
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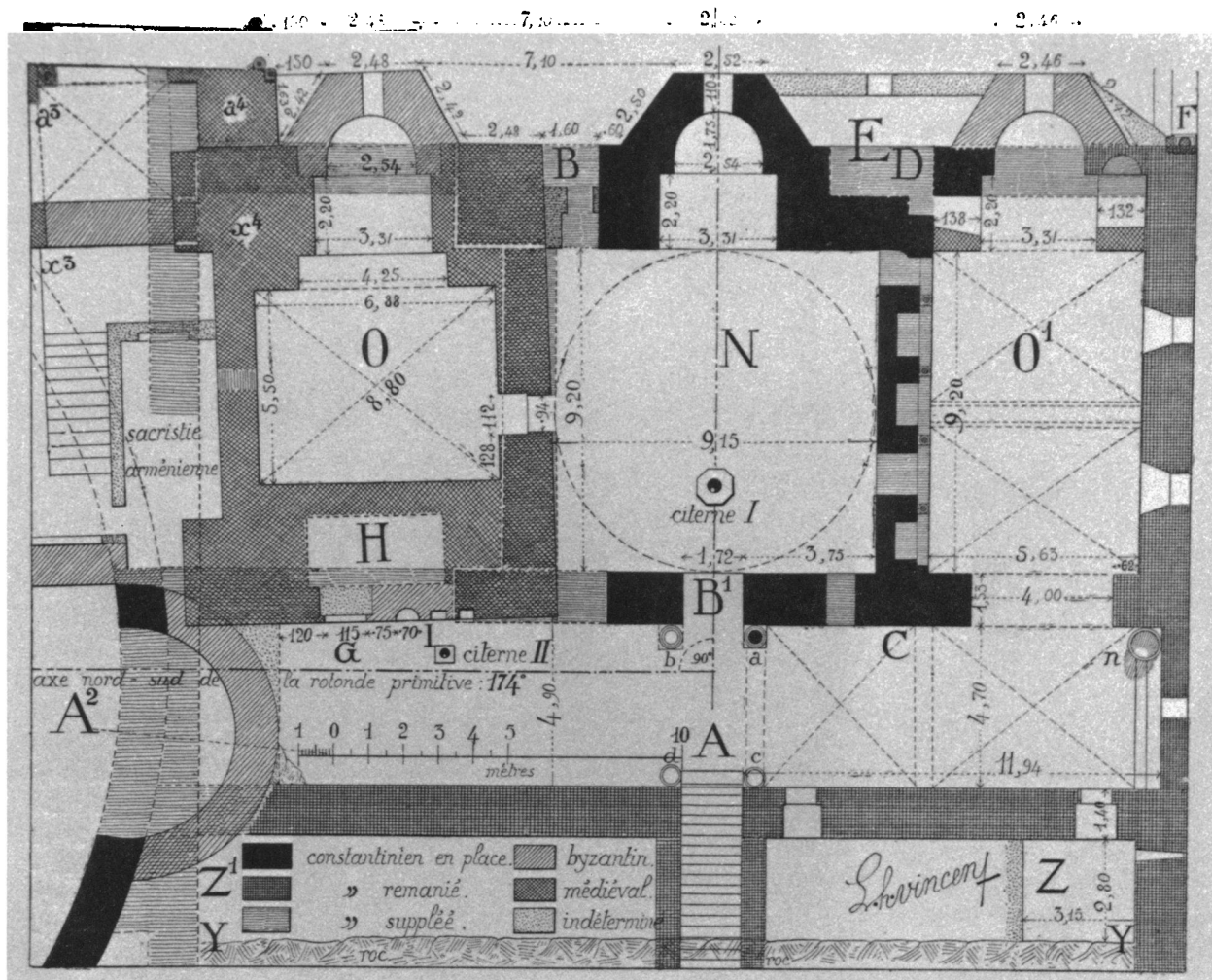
3 Jerusalem, Holy Sepulcher, piscina from the patriarchal apartments (redrawn after C. Tinelli)



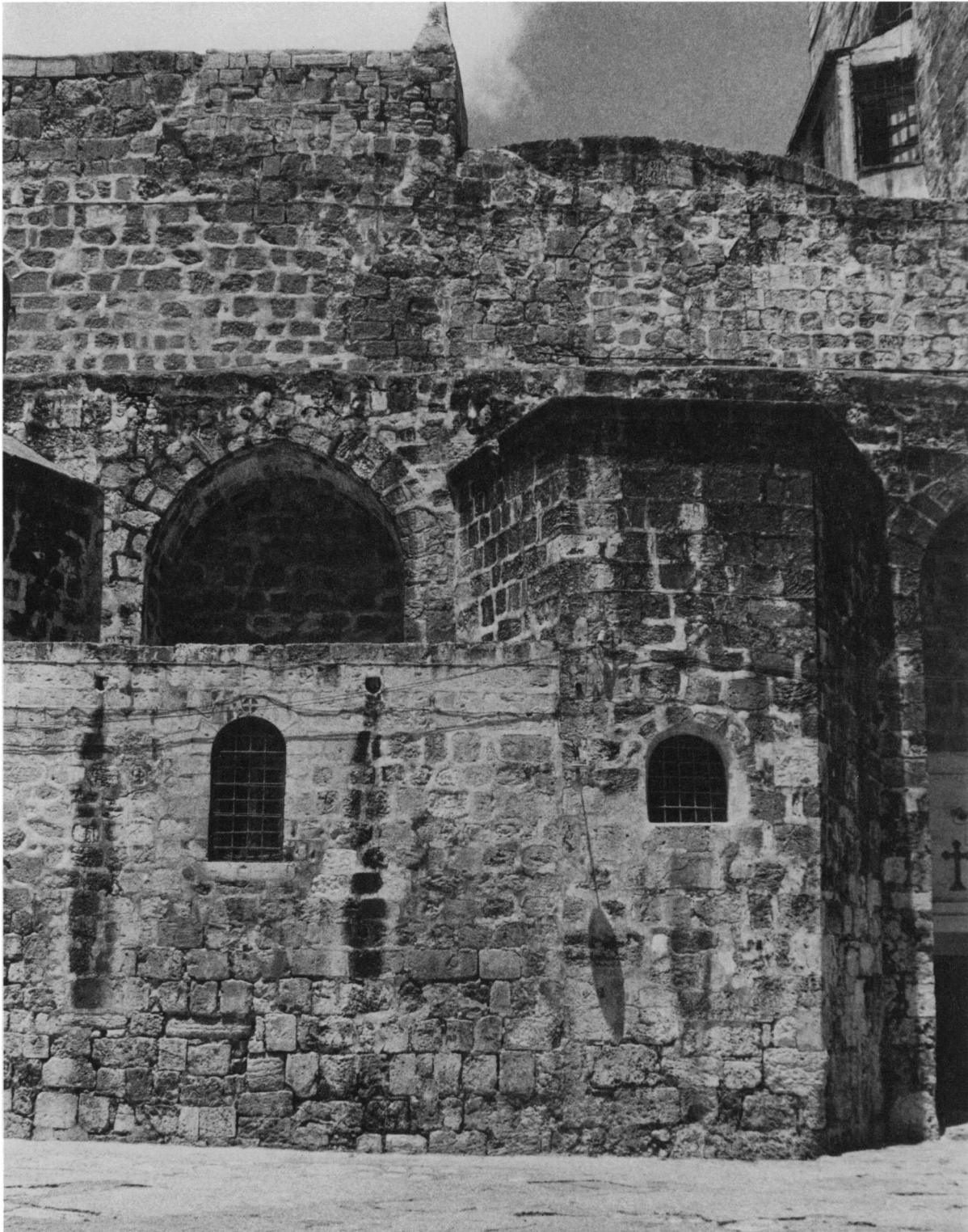
4 Jerusalem, Holy Sepulcher, plan of the complex after 1048 (redrawn by R. Oosterhout after Corbo)



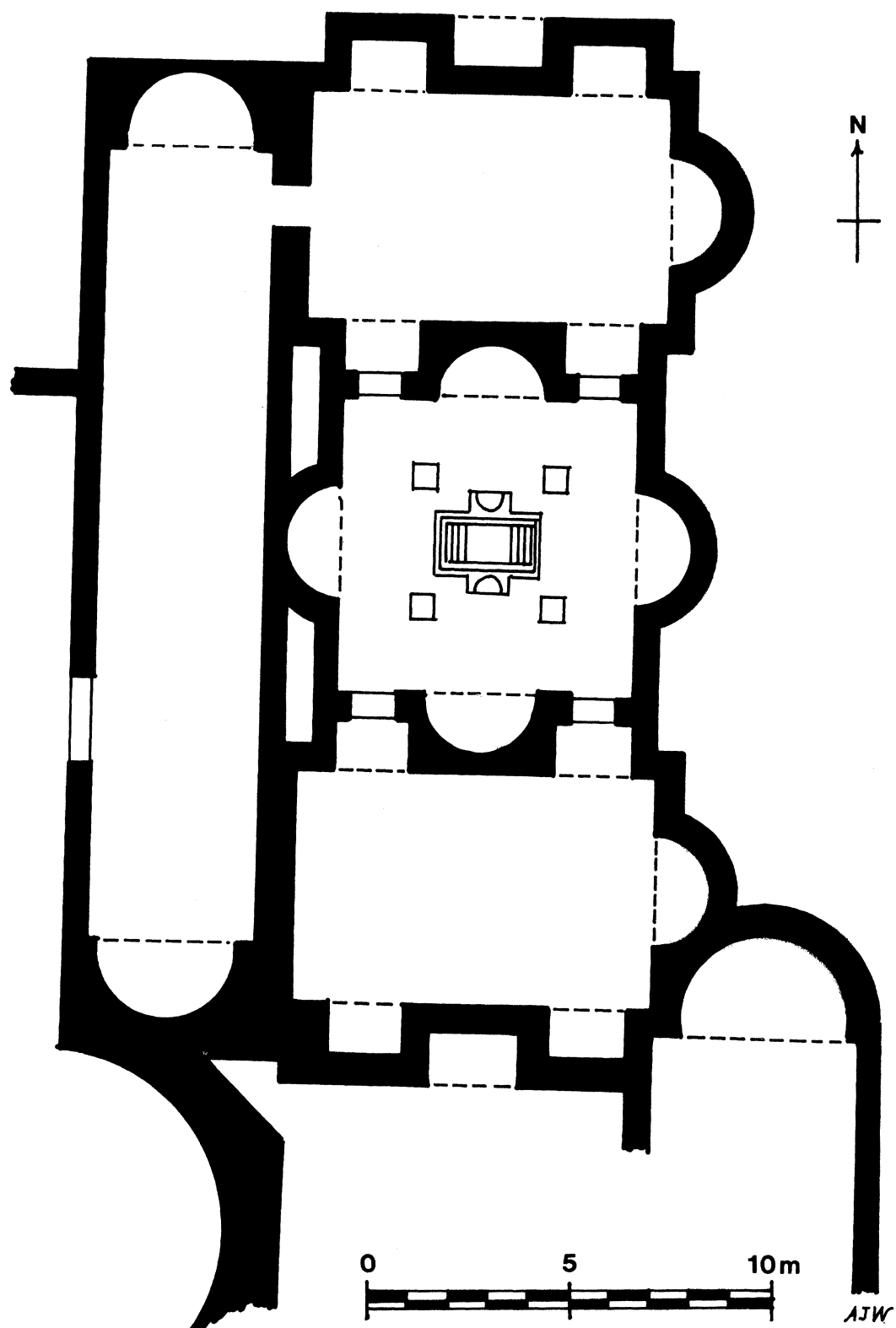
5 Jerusalem, Holy Sepulcher, whole of the Constantinian complex according to H. Vincent and F.-M. Abel



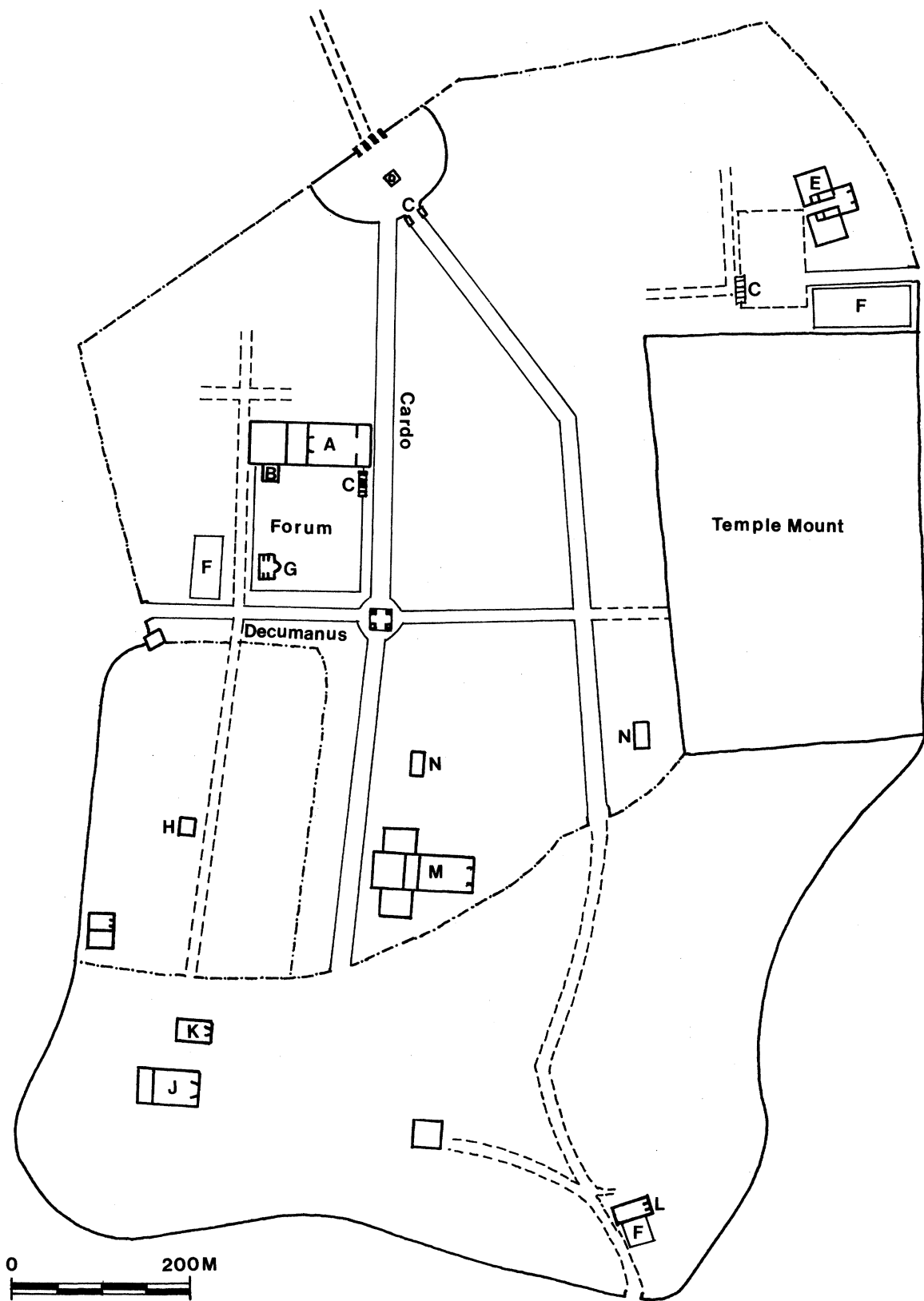
6 Jerusalem, Holy Sepulcher, detail of the building complex to the south of the Rotunda of the Holy Sepulcher according to Vincent and Abel



7 Jerusalem, Church of the Holy Sepulcher, baptistery complex, exterior view from the east



8 Side, south coast of Asia Minor, baptistery, plan (redrawn after Eyice)



9 Jerusalem, Holy Sepulcher, plan of the city (redrawn after Tsafirir).
 A: Church of the Holy Sepulcher; B: baptistery; C: arch

so-called Armenian Lectionary, a work which reflects ritual practice in Jerusalem during the first half of the fifth century.¹⁹

All three works attest to the importance of the role of baptism in the celebration of Easter, the central feast of the liturgical calendar.²⁰ More specifically, the Bordeaux pilgrim's account indicates both that the baptismal hall was constructed prior to the Rotunda, as part of the first Constantinian program of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and that it was a distinct structure. Cyril's text adds corroboration, suggesting that the baptistery was a sizable space, independent if not detached from the Anastasis and Martyrium, and preceded by an ample vestibule. The separate situation of the baptistery is confirmed by Egeria and the Armenian Lectionary. These early literary sources do not, however, offer any clear indication of the specific location of the Constantinian baptistery.

By the sixth century, baptism had lost its ritual centrality. The almost complete Christianization of the empire with the attendant cessation of adult conversion and the prevalence of infant baptism eroded the status of baptism in the Easter celebrations.²¹ Further, the place of Easter as the civic feast of Jerusalem declined dramatically in the aftermath of the Arab conquest of 638. With Jerusalem under Islamic authority, the public expression of the Christian cult in Jerusalem was curtailed. Although the ritual presence of initiation in the Easter liturgy was much diminished, literary references indicate, nevertheless, that baptism continued to be administered in a separate space at the Holy Sepulcher. Among the functionaries of the Holy Sepulcher listed in the *Commemoratorium de casis Dei* is a custodian of the font.²² The Anastasis

Typikon, a work of the tenth century, follows the Armenian and Georgian Lectionaries in plotting the movement of the rite: "Directly the patriarch gives the blessing and enters into the baptistery in order to baptize, then returns to the [basilica of] St. Constantine and the liturgy begins."²³

An unambiguous literary testimony to the baptistery's location finally occurs in the pilgrimage account of Saewulf from 1102. The relevant passage reads:

At the sides of the church [i.e., the Rotunda] itself two most celebrated chapels cluster, one on either side, namely, in honor of Holy Mary [to the north] and St. John [to the south], as they were themselves partakers of our Lord's Passion and stood at His side, one on the right and one on the left. . . . On the other side of the Chapel of St. John is the most beautiful monastery of the Holy Trinity, wherein is a baptistery, to which is attached a chapel of St. James the Apostle, who was granted the first episcopal chair of Jerusalem. All these places are so arranged and ordered that anyone standing at the very end of the church can clearly see all five churches from door to door.²⁴

This document describes the Holy Sepulcher after its destruction in 1009 by the fanatic Fatimid caliph al-Hakim and its rebuilding by the Byzantine emperor Constantine IX Monomachus in 1048 (Fig. 4). Other pilgrimage accounts indicate that the baptistery to the south of the Rotunda continued to be used in the refashioned Crusader Church of the Holy Sepulcher, dedicated in 1149.²⁵ The question remains: is this a newly sited baptistery or does it incorporate its Constantinian predecessor?

R. Ousterhout, in his recent analysis of the Byzantine contribution to the Holy Sepulcher, assumes that the three chapels to the south of the Rotunda, including the large, centralized baptismal hall, were new additions of the eleventh cen-

¹⁹ *Le Codex arménien Jérusalem 121*, ed. A. Renoux, PO 35:1, 36:2 (Turnhout, 1969, 1971), 297, 307. For a description of the unfolding of this vigil, G. Bertonière, *The Historical Development of the Easter Vigil and Related Services in the Greek Church*, OCA 193 (Rome, 1972), 58–71. Also see F. C. Conybeare, *Rituale Armenorum* (Oxford, 1905), appendix.

²⁰ For a discussion of the order of service in Jerusalem, R. Zarfass, *Die Schriftlesung im Kathedraloffizium Jerusalems*, Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen 48 (Münster, 1968); more generally on the importance of Easter and the role in its development played by Jerusalem, T. J. Talley, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year* (New York, 1986).

²¹ Bertonière writes of the evidence of Codex Jerusalem Patriarchate Hagios Stauros 43, which provides information on the Easter liturgy of Jerusalem before the Crusades: "One has the definite impression that baptism, by this time, had lost its practical significance at the vigil." *Easter Vigil*, 66. For the same phenomenon in Alexandria, H. Brakmann, "Synaxis katholike in Alexandria," *JbAC* 30 (1987), 74–89, esp. 88–89.

²² T. Tobler, *Descriptiones Terrae Sanctae* (Leipzig, 1874; repr. Hildesheim-New York, 1974), 78.

²³ *Typikon tes en Hierosolymois ekklesias*, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Analecta Hierosolymitikes stachyologias*, II (St. Petersburg, 1894), 1–254, esp. 186.22–24.

²⁴ "In lateribus vero ipsius ecclesiae duae capellae sibi adhaerent preclarissimae hinc inde, Scae Mariae scilicet Scique Johannis in honore, sicut ipsi participes Dominicae Passionis sibi in lateribus constiterunt hinc inde. . . . Ex altera vero parte sancti Johannis ecclesiae est monasterium sanctae Trinitatis pulcherrimum, in quo est locus baptisterii, cui adhaeret capella sancti Jacobi apostoli, qui primam cathedram pontificalem Jerosolimis obtinuit; ita compositae et ordinatae omnes, ut quilibet in ultima stans ecclesia omnes quinque ecclesias perspicere potest clarissime per ostium ad ostium." Cited by Vincent, 257–8; trans. the Bishop of Clifton, Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society 4 (London, 1896), 13–14.

²⁵ E.g., Theodoric, *Libellus de Locis Sanctis*, ed. T. Tobler (Paris, 1865), xi, 27.13–21.

tury, as do Tinelli and Corbo.²⁶ In contrast, H. Vincent claimed to recognize enough Constantinian masonry in the cluster of three chapels to the south of the Rotunda on the west side of the parvis to identify this as the original site of the baptistery of the Holy Sepulcher.²⁷ He reconstructed the form of the fourth-century baptismal complex as a domed, apsed chapel flanked by oblong rooms and linked by a western corridor (Figs. 5 and 6). He also argued that the orientation of the complex, as determined by the axis of the surviving central chapel, is aligned not with the eleventh-century Byzantine reconstruction of the Rotunda but rather with the original Constantinian structure, suggesting that it was part of the fourth-century complex.²⁸ The space to the south of the complex, now largely under Greek Orthodox control, has never been systematically excavated. However, Corbo's 1980 survey drawings seem to confirm Vincent's claim that the chapels were aligned with the Constantinian basilica and south colonnade, not with the eastern apse and three eastern chapels with which the Byzantines replaced the Martyrium. The matter of the masonry is more ambiguous. The ubiquitous appearance of the warm local limestone that has been used for construction in Jerusalem from early antiquity and which is still the facing material required by modern building codes makes it difficult to distinguish building phases (Figs. 7 and 8). However, if these buildings were purely eleventh-century productions, it is odd that there is no evidence of the distinctive Byzantine masonry technique which so clearly labels their contribution elsewhere in the Holy Sepulcher complex.²⁹

²⁶ R. Ousterhout, "Rebuilding the Temple: Constantine Monomachus and the Holy Sepulchre," *JSAH* 48 (1989), 66–78.

²⁷ Vincent, note 10 above, 138–44.

²⁸ Vincent finds further support for his hypothesis in the location of a cistern opening on the central axis of the central space. Coüasnon accepts Vincent's siting of the baptistery and adds further arguments, including his own reading of the Madaba mosaic map of Jerusalem and of the Bordeaux pilgrim's narrative. C. Coüasnon, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem*, The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy, 1972, translated from French by J.-P. B. and Claude Ross (London, 1974), 46–50. The Madaba Map, like the Bordeaux pilgrim's account, is flexible enough to support just about any topographical hypothesis. There is nothing so distinct about the square structure with a red roof to the right (south) of the Rotunda in this image of ca. A.D. 570, that it must be read as a representation of the baptistery. M. Avi-Yonah, *The Madaba Mosaic Map* (Jerusalem, 1954); J. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades* (Jerusalem, 1977), provides a useful diagrammatic analysis on his endpapers.

²⁹ Ousterhout, "Rebuilding the Temple," 74–76, explains the discrepancy by postulating a local workshop working contemporaneously with their Byzantine colleagues.

A review of these current scholarly arguments suggests that it is impossible to determine with assurance the location of the fourth-century baptistery of the Holy Sepulcher exclusively on the internal evidence of the site and related texts. However, a broader consideration of early Christian baptismal practice both problematizes the attribution of the Holy Sepulcher's baptistery to the eleventh century and lends some support to Vincent's reconstruction. There are late antique parallels to Vincent's proposed baptismal hall. Although the hypothesized three-chambered baptistery with a vestibule differs from the familiar freestanding, centralized baptisteries of the early Christian West, such as that built by Constantine for the Lateran cathedral of Rome, differences in eastern ritual practice may have determined a distinct baptismal type. In the early fourth century, Jerusalem was in the ecclesiastical province of Oriens, which was controlled by the patriarchate of Antioch. Although nothing remains of the baptistery at Antioch, some episcopal churches under its sway take a form very distinct from that of the principal Italian examples. For example, the baptistery excavated at Side, on the south coast of Asia Minor, bears a close resemblance to that extant in Jerusalem (Fig. 9). Side was a flourishing port until the end of the third century A.D.; it experienced a revival at the end of the fourth century.³⁰ The cathedral of the city, one of the three large basilicas within its walls, was constructed on the main north-south colonnaded street. Attached to the east wall of its north transept is a large (27 m × 22 m externally), elaborately articulated and decorated baptistery which has been variously dated to between the fourth and sixth centuries.³¹ Like the baptistery still surviving in Jerusalem, the Side baptistery is made up of a domed, apsed hall housing the font flanked by secondary apsed rooms, all linked by a substantial western corridor. In form, scale, and even relative location, the Side baptistery resembles that of the Holy Sepulcher, indicating that such an arrangement was known in late antiquity.³²

³⁰ S. Eyice, "La ville byzantine de Side en Pamphylie," *Actes du X Congrès international des Etudes Byzantines*, 1955 (Istanbul, 1957), 130–31.

³¹ S. Eyice, "Un baptistère byzantin à Side en Pamphylie," *Actes du Ve Congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne*, Aix-en-Provence, 1954 (Vatican City, 1957), 577–84; A. M. Mansel, *Die Ruinen von Side*, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Istanbul (Berlin, 1963), 167–68, fig. 134.

³² A. Khatchatrian, *Origine et typologie des baptistères paléochrétiens* (Paris, 1982), 40.

In contrast, it would be difficult if not impossible to cite a middle Byzantine parallel to such a baptistery. Large baptisteries do not seem to have been built in the Orthodox East in the high Middle Ages. This part of the complex, like the other surviving parts of the early Christian monument, has certainly been thoroughly rebuilt. Nevertheless, it is difficult to reconcile a *de novo* eleventh-century construction of a large baptismal hall at the Holy Sepulcher with the liturgical evidence of baptism's greatly diminished ritual role at that time.³³ Although great baptismal halls begin again to be built in the West in the eleventh century, the re-emergence of the form can be associated with the growth of communes,³⁴ a development which had no parallel in the East.³⁵

Observation of late antique baptismal practice elsewhere in the empire yields even more significant argumentation in favor of positioning the baptistery to the south of the complex and against locating it to the north. To the north, the baptismal hall would have been embedded in the administrative wing of the church; to the south, it would have occupied a prominent, public site. In the fourth and fifth centuries, baptisteries associated with major ecclesiastical complexes do not occur as secondary elements buried within ancillary structures. In the imperial residences of Rome, Milan, and Ravenna, baptisteries were large, centralized structures, independent of both the cathedral church and the bishop's quarters, prominently and publicly positioned.³⁶ No evidence of the early baptistery of St. Sophia in Constantinople survives, although the one extant baptistery from Justinian's sixth-century rebuilding of the church is a domed, freestanding rotunda, again independent of the episcopal rooms.³⁷ In sees as diverse as Salamis and Kourion in Cyprus, Ephesus and Side in Asia Minor, and Carthage and Sufetula in North Africa,

the importance of the baptistery is marked by its architectural complexity and relative autonomy.³⁸ The baptistery does not appear as an unimportant side chamber. How could the baptistery have been given less prominence in one of the great ecclesiastical centers of the empire? The space in the patriarchal apartments allocated by Corbo to the baptistery is inadequate to its social and ritual importance. It appears that both the arguments for locating the baptistery within the administrative rooms to the north of the Rotunda and the assumption that the present baptistery complex was newly constructed in the eleventh century involve serious historical anomalies.

II. BAPTISM AND THE SACRED TOPOGRAPHY OF JERUSALEM

Baptism was a central sacrament of the early church. It constructed the initiates' magical reexperiencing of Christ's passion. According to St. Paul, the believer was cleansed of his sins and admitted into the body of the church by participating in Christ's entombment and resurrection through baptism: "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." (Rom. 6:3–4)³⁹ To evoke the correspondence between baptism and the resurrection, the culmination of the Easter feast, the climax of the liturgical calendar, was the chosen moment for initiation.⁴⁰ The spiritual and

³³ See above, note 22.

³⁴ E. Cattaneo, "Il battistero in Italia dopo il Mille," in *Miscellanea Gilles Gerard Meersseman, Italia sacra. Studi e documenti di storia ecclesiastica* XV, 2 vols. (Padua, 1970), I, 171–95.

³⁵ A. P. Kazhdan and A. W. Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Berkeley, 1985), 46–56.

³⁶ For the Lateran, G. Pelliccioni, *Le nuove scoperte sulle origini del battistero Lateranense*, Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia, ser. III, Memorie, vol. 12.1 (Vatican City, 1973); for Ravenna, S. Kostof, *The Orthodox Baptistery of Ravenna* (New Haven, 1965); for Milan, G. De Angelis d'Ossat, "Origine e fortuna dei Battisteri ambrosiani," *ArtLomb* 14 (1969), 1–20; E. Cattaneo, "Appunti sui battisteri antichi di Milano," *RendIstLomb* 103 (1969), 849–64; Roberti and Paredi, *Il battistero Ambrosiano* (note 8 above).

³⁷ R. J. Mainstone, *Hagia Sophia: Architecture, Structure and Liturgy of Justinian's Great Church* (New York, 1988), 122–24.

³⁸ For Salamis, C. Delvoye, "La place des grandes basiliques de Salamine de Chypre dans l'architecture paléochrétienne," *Salamine de Chypre: Histoire et archéologie*. Lyon, 1978 (Paris, 1980), 313–28; for Kourion, A. H. S. Megaw, "Excavations at the Episcopal Basilica of Kourion in Cyprus," *DOP* 30 (1976), 345–71; for Ephesus, M. F. Castelfranchi, *Baptisteria* (Rome, 1980), 31–65; for Sufetula, N. Duval, "Le groupe épiscopal de Sbeitla," *BAntFr* (1964), 50–57; for Carthage, I. Vaultrin, "Les basiliques chrétiennes de Carthage. Etude d'archéologie et d'histoire," *RAfr* 63 (1932), 291–307; for Side, see below.

³⁹ Trans. *The Oxford Annotated Bible*, ed. H. G. May and B. M. Metzger (Oxford, 1962), 1365.

⁴⁰ Pentecost both as the time at which the first 3,000 were baptized and with its clear reference to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was also allowed as a legitimate moment for baptism, East and West. The best summary of the reasons for baptism at Easter and Pentecost is provided by Leo the Great, Letter 16, PL 54, cols. 695–704. In the east, Epiphany was also a possible feast on which to be baptized. See K. Holl, "Der Ursprung des Epiphaniensfestes," in his *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte*, II, Tübingen, 1928, 123–54. In addition, in Jerusalem, the liturgy of the feast of the dedication of the Holy Sepulcher followed that of Easter and included baptism. E.g., Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. J. Bidez, SC 306 (Paris, 1983), II.26, 346–48.

liturgical centrality of baptism derives from its social power: baptism functioned in the early Christian period as the principal means of defining membership in the newly empowered religious group. Baptism, admittance into the community, was controlled by the bishop. For example, Tertullian (ca. 200) states: "The supreme right of giving it [baptism] belongs to the high priest, which is the bishop; after him, to the presbyters and deacons, yet not without commission from the bishop, on account of the Church's dignity."⁴¹ In Aelia, as elsewhere in the early Christian world, the bishop was identified with initiation. Egeria's account of the enrollment for initiation manifests the bishop's tight control of access to the Christian community:

I must also describe how those who are baptized at Easter are instructed. Whoever gives his name does so the day before Lent, and the priest notes down all their names; . . . on the following day, the first day of Lent, . . . a throne is set up for the bishop in the center of the major church, the Martyrium. The priests sit on stools on both sides, and all the clergy stand around. One by one the candidates are led forward, in such a way that the men come with their godfathers and the women with their godmothers. Then the bishop questions individually the neighbors of the one who has come up. . . .⁴²

The more powerful the ritual, the greater the authority of its officiant;⁴³ by the end of the third century, the bishop provided the focus of structure and control of the urban Christian community. Consequently, the prestige of the bishop and his see may often be inferred from the size and lavishness of his baptistery. Thus, the prominence of the baptismal hall in the ecclesiastical architecture of the late empire is the material expression of both the spiritual and social significance of initiation into the cult.

The recognition of the central importance of the rite of initiation in the fourth century, of its executant and of its architectural staging is crucial to understanding the remodeling of the sacred topography of Jerusalem. There the ritual of initiation and site converge with particular force. As Egeria's text attests, catechumens were enrolled at the beginning of Lent, catechized and exorcized through Lent, and baptized at the moment of Christ's resurrection at the dawn of Easter Sunday. St. Cyril's lectures on baptism to the newly baptized

repeatedly emphasize that baptism is a reenactment of the passion:

You descend dead in sin, you come up alive in righteousness, for if you were united by likeness to the Saviour's death, so also you shall be counted worthy of his resurrection. For as Jesus died in taking away the sins of the world, that, by putting sin to death, he might rise in righteousness, so, too, when you go down into the water and are, in a fashion, entombed in the water, as he was in the rock, you may rise again to walk in the newness of life.⁴⁴

In Jerusalem particularly, the sacred topography of the city was incorporated in the initiates' reenactment of the passion. Cyril makes clear that the sites of the historical crucifixion, entombment, and resurrection were concretely linked with the rite:

There are, beloved, many true testimonies to Christ. The Father testifies of the Son from heaven. . . . The holy wood of the cross, seen to this day among us, and taken away by those who have received portions with faith to places that now cover almost the whole world, bears witness. . . . This Golgotha, sacred above all such places, bears witness by its very look. The most holy Sepulchre bears witness, and the stone that lies there to this day. . . .⁴⁵

Thus the rite of initiation was theatrically staged within a liturgy which exploited historically charged space as a means of telescoping time. Cyril fully employs the immediate material evidence of the passion to empower ritual, moving his hearers to an identification with foundational Christian dogma, the resurrection of Jesus.

Although initiation into the cult is commonly associated with the physical intimacy and spatial privacy required by the nudity of anointment and immersion, a broader audience was involved in other sequences of the rite. Not only were the neophytes introduced to all of the members of the church in the Martyrium at the conclusion of the ceremony at the dawn of Easter, but they were also announced to the wider urban public by the stationary liturgy. Through religious processions, the church of Jerusalem usurped the urban landscape as stage and the entire population, Christian and non-Christian, as audience. Further, descriptions of the stationary liturgy of Jerusalem suggest the scale and importance of the baptismal rite in the city. According to Egeria, the bishop, accompanied by the newly baptized, went in procession, "singing

⁴¹ *Tertullian's Homily on Baptism*, ed. and trans. E. Evans (London, 1964), 17.2–5.

⁴² *Itinerarium Egeriae*, 45, 87.1–13; trans. Gingras, *Egeria*, 122.

⁴³ E.g., J. S. La Fontaine, *Initiation* (Manchester, 1966).

⁴⁴ PG 33, col. 444A.

⁴⁵ PG 33, cols. 685B–688A; trans. with amendments, E. H. Gifford, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, VII (repr. Grand Rapids, Mich., 1989), 62–63.

hymns," from the Eleona on the Mount of Olives to the Anastasis every afternoon during the eight days of Easter.⁴⁶ Thus the stational liturgy of Jerusalem presented the spiritually charged initiates to the broader community at the same moment that it absorbed the aura of the other sacralized sites of the city.⁴⁷ The bishop's authority, incorporating the sacred power of his setting, was displayed and thereby perpetuated by the civic liturgies associated with baptism.

The acknowledgement of the social significance of baptism and its officiant invites an assessment of the urban context of the Jerusalem baptistery, which in turn provides the basis for a revisionist reading of the function of the site and its politics. Jerusalem was remodeled as a small gentile city by Hadrian after the suppression of the second Jewish revolt of A.D. 132–135 and the expulsion of the Jews. Hadrian dedicated it to himself and Jupiter Capitolinus, with the name Aelia Capitolina. The new Jerusalem had its center outside the holy city of the Jews, some distance to the west of the desolated Temple Mount.⁴⁸ There, set at the junction of the new *cardo maximus* and the *decumanus*, Hadrian constructed the main forum of the city, which doubtless included the conventional collection of commercial, administrative, and religious buildings. It was the north side of this center of the "New Jerusalem" that Constantine appropriated for himself and for Christianity after his victory over Licinius in 324.

A recognition of the topographic prominence of the building site of the Holy Sepulcher affects the reading of Eusebius' description of the complex. Eusebius, who as metropolitan bishop of Caesarea would have been fully aware of the architectural enterprises of his suffragan at Jerusalem, is the first and most important witness to Constantine's building activities. Eusebius claims that the site of the sepulcher was consciously buried beneath pagan appurtenances.⁴⁹ Evil men attempted to obscure the truth revealed by the tomb by covering it over with a great mound of earth and a temple of

Venus. They succeeded in their plot until, "with the guidance of the divine spirit," the emperor Constantine began construction on the site. Then, "contrary to all expectation, the venerable and halloved monument of our Saviour's resurrection was discovered."⁵⁰

Eusebius' narrative invites its readers to make two historically problematical assumptions. First, since the text fails to indicate how Constantine, apart from the revelation of the divine spirit, knew the location of the Holy Sepulcher, rationalist apologists have been tempted to argue that the site was identified by local tradition.⁵¹ However, there is no evidence that this site of the sepulcher was recognized and visited in pre-Constantinian times, though other sacred spots were venerated. The cave of the Nativity was known to Justin and Origen;⁵² the cave on the Mount of Olives was apparently a pilgrimage site by 314, before Eusebius wrote his *Demonstration of the Gospel*.⁵³ Also, an uninterrupted oral or literary tradition in Jerusalem between the first and fourth centuries identifying the site is questionable in view of the discontinuity of the Christian community itself. In his *Ecclesiastical History* Eusebius notes that the earliest Christian community in Jerusalem was ethnically Jewish: "... up to the siege of the Jews by Hadrian the successions of bishops [in Jerusalem] were fifteen in number. It is said that they were all Hebrews by origin. ... For their whole church at that time consisted of Hebrews. ..."⁵⁴ It is, consequently, quite reasonable to suggest that any surviving local tradition might well have been severed by Hadrian's dispersal of the Jews.⁵⁵ For example, on the basis of his study of the episcopal lists, C. H. Turner writes:

The break in continuity between Jerusalem and Aelia must have been absolute. The Christians of Jerusalem must have been ... of the most conservative type of

⁴⁶*Itinerarium Egeriae*, 39, 83.14–24.

⁴⁷For an excellent description and analysis of the stational liturgy, J. F. Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship. The Origins, Development and Meaning of Stational Liturgy*, OCA 228 (Rome, 1987).

⁴⁸See Y. Tsafrir, "Jerusalem," *RBK*, III (Stuttgart, 1975), 544–51; N. Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem*, rev. Eng. ed. (New York, 1983), 205–7, 226.

⁴⁹*Vita*, iii, 26–27, 95.5–96.19; also see Jerome, ep. 58, ed. I. Hilberg, *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistulae*, I, CSEL 54 (Vienna, 1910), 531.5–532.4.

⁵⁰*Vita*, iii, 26, 96.6–7; 28, 96.19–22.

⁵¹For example, D. Bahat, "Does the Holy Sepulchre Mark the Burial Place of Jesus?," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 12, no. 3 (1986), 26–45, esp. 37.

⁵²*Dialogue with Trypho*, PG 6, col. 657; *Against Celsus*, ed. M. Borret, SC 132–136 (Paris, 1967–1968), 1.51.

⁵³Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 166.

⁵⁴Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. and trans. K. Lake and J. E. L. Oulton, Loeb (London, 1926, 1932), book IV, v; I, 308.2–310.3.

⁵⁵For the recent bibliography and restatement of this question, J. E. Taylor, *A Critical Investigation of Archaeological Material Assigned to Palestinian Jewish-Christians of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*, Ph.D. diss. (University of Edinburgh, 1989), esp. 203–30. I am grateful to Dr. Steven Gorenson for bringing this dissertation to my attention.

Jewish churchmanship: the Christians of Aelia, if at first there were any of them at all, would have been not only gentiles by race, but inimical, by the very fact of their consenting to settle in the pagan city, to all that pertained to Judaism or even Jewish Christianity.⁵⁶

In view of the historical circumstances of Jerusalem, readers should take more seriously Eusebius' own acknowledgement that the site of the Passion "had remained unknown for a long series of years."⁵⁷

The second dubious assumption concerning the founding of the Holy Sepulcher has not been imposed on Eusebius' narrative by its interpretants, but lurks undisclosed in his text. Eusebius claims that the new Jerusalem was built over the site of Jesus' resurrection in order to obscure it. Such a claim requires the reader to believe that Hadrian's town planners, in the aftermath of the destruction of Jerusalem and dispersal of the Jews, located the center of their new city not with a view to the convenience, water supply, and geology of the site, but rather with the sole end of covering up the unmarked shrine of a dispersed heretical Jewish sect.

A less historically improbable reading of the source is possible. As in Rome, Antioch, and perhaps Constantinople, Constantine's first ecclesiastical construction in Aelia was to be a cathedral. A site in the center of the city was selected: archaeological evidence indicates that the church complex was constructed on the north side of the main Roman forum of Aelia. Several buildings were demolished, including a temple. Only in the course of leveling the area for the construction of the cathedral complex was the rock-cut tomb from an earlier Jewish cemetery on the site serendipitously revealed. It was immediately identified as the locus of Jesus' entombment and resurrection. With this discovery came Constantine's order to Macarius, bishop of Jerusalem, to make the church of the complex the most glorious in the empire. What was initially begun as an episcopal complex became, in addition, a great martyrion. It is this latter function on which historians, ancient and modern, have exclusively concentrated.

The supposition that the Holy Sepulcher was intended to function as a cathedral explains the appearance of both the basilica and the baptistery prior to the Rotunda, a construction sequence that scholars have found anomalous, given the focal

importance of the site of the resurrection.⁵⁸ Indeed, the coeval appearance of the baptistery and the basilica, evident from the Bordeaux pilgrim's testimony, reinforces the hypothesis that the ecclesiastical complex was intended as a cathedral. If the present baptistery represents the fourth-century structure, it was allotted a particularly prominent site. It directly abutted Aelia's public center and stood on the axis established by the great Hadrianic arch marking the east entrance of the forum (Fig. 10). It would thus have occupied a position as conspicuous as that of the baptisteries of the other great fourth- and fifth-century foundations.

The identification of the Holy Sepulcher as a cathedral clarifies the politics of Constantine's building program. Its transformation into Christendom's major pilgrimage shrine complemented both imperial and local ecclesiastical projects. The emperor Constantine began construction of his new church in Jerusalem in 324, soon after his defeat of his former colleague, Licinius, and eleven years after the issuance of the so-called Edict of Toleration ending the persecution of Christians. It has been suggested that Constantine's victory over Licinius had been in part—perhaps in large part—sustained by the Christian population of Oriens.⁵⁹ Constantine's building project in Jerusalem was part of an extensive program of reconstruction in the cities in the eastern provinces undertaken in the aftermath of his unification of the empire. This program included a number of ecclesiastical foundations. According to Eusebius, Jerusalem and Antioch were the two major objects of his largess.⁶⁰ In Antioch he adorned the "new city" with a grand cathedral, the Μεγάλη ἐκκλησία or "great church," known also as the Golden Octagon.⁶¹ It appears that he had similar intentions for Jerusalem. Rome also reveals Constantine's concern with ecclesiastical administrative centers. The Lateran

⁵⁸ E.g., Ze'ev Rubin, "The Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Conflict between the Sees of Jerusalem and Caesarea," *The Jerusalem Cathedral*, ed. L. I. Levine (Jerusalem, 1982), 79–105, who gives an interesting if tendentious reading of Eusebius' *l'cunae*.

⁵⁹ T. D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), claims, for example, that "Licinius' ultimate failure was intimately connected with his religious policies . . .," 70.

⁶⁰ Eusebius, *Eis Konstantinon Triakontaeterikos*, ed. I. A. Heikel, GCS 7 (Leipzig, 1902), ix.14–17, 220.30–221.19.

⁶¹ F. W. Deichmann, "Das Oktogon von Antiocheia: Heroon-Martyrion, Palastkirche oder Kathedrale?," *BZ* 65 (1972), 40–56. For a more detailed discussion of the sources, W. Eltester, "Die Kirchen Antiochias im IV. Jahrhundert," *ZNW* 36 (1937), 251–86, from which G. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria* (Princeton, 1961), 342–49, derives his historical arguments.

⁵⁶ C. H. Turner, "The Early Episcopal Lists, II: The Jerusalem List," *JTS* I (1900), 529–53, esp. 550.

⁵⁷ *Vita*, iii, 30, 97.13–15.

complex, including as in Jerusalem the bishop's apartments and baptistery, was begun as early as 312–313 and seems to have been Constantine's first major Christian building project. The emperor's monumental commemoration of Rome's martyrs apparently began only later.⁶² Constantine's foundation of cathedrals, like his calling of church councils, suggests that he believed his political and spiritual interests would best be served through conspicuous contributions to the cohesion of the church's administrative infrastructure.

The Holy Sepulcher, as locus of the throne and power of the bishop, also played a central role in defining his status and authority. As is well documented, the bishop of Jerusalem periodically engaged the metropolitan of Caesarea and, later, the patriarch of Antioch in a struggle for station within the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Implicated in these political rivalries is a development that might be called "the commodification of the holy." Jerusalem, and particularly the site of the Holy Sepulcher, became progressively enriched and legitimated through the material signs of its particular sacredness.

Perhaps the most remarkable object of this new set of practices is the True Cross. Eusebius neglects to mention the invention of the cross. Moreover, although he records the dowager empress Helena's visit to Palestine in 326, Eusebius fails to associate her either with the finding of the cross or indeed with the Holy Sepulcher.⁶³ In his account, Eusebius attributes to Helena only the foundation of two churches over sacred caves, the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem in which Jesus was born and the Eleona outside the walls of Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives, which was originally associated with the Ascension and the revelation of the mysteries to the apostles.⁶⁴ Eusebius' silence, as well as the absence of reference to the True Cross in the Bordeaux pilgrim's account, suggest that the relic had either not yet appeared or that it had not

yet achieved the celebrity that it later enjoyed.⁶⁵ By the middle of the fourth century, however, the True Cross was very much in place, generating partible witnesses to the site's importance. Cyril, in the passage quoted above, indicates that fragments of the holy cross were already widely distributed: "The holy wood of the cross, seen to this day among us, and taken away by those who have received portions with faith to places that now cover almost the whole world, bears witness. . . ."⁶⁶ In the course of the century, the narrative of the discovery of the True Cross was also elaborated. The first surviving associations of the cross with St. Helena were made by the great Milanese churchman and relic finder, St. Ambrose, in the later fourth century, and the early fifth-century historian, Sozomen, a Palestine native writing in Jerusalem.⁶⁷

In addition to the True Cross, Egeria attests to the presence at the Holy Sepulcher of the ring of Solomon and a phial of oil used in the anointment of Old Testament kings.⁶⁸ Concurrently the number of sacred sites in and around Jerusalem were recognized and commemorated. For example, the cave associated with the teaching of the apostles and the Ascension was marked by the Eleona, built by Constantine apparently at his mother's behest after her visit there.⁶⁹ By the later fourth century, a second site on the Mount of Olives was identified as the locus of the Ascension. Still later, feet appeared to confirm the site's sacredness. The growth of the stationary liturgy during the fourth and fifth centuries reifies the progressive sanctification of the city.

The sacralization of the topography of Jerusalem, as witnessed in the multiplication of relics, the evolution of the stationary liturgy, and the distribution of the cross, corresponded to Jerusalem's reassertion of its position as a city of ecclesiastical significance after nearly two centuries of obscurity. As early as 325, just as construction on Constantine's new basilica was beginning, canon 7 of the Council of Nicaea ambiguously acknowledged the incon-

⁶² Work on San Lorenzo on the Via Tiburtina and the great basilica of San Pietro is commonly held to have started in the mid-320s. A pre-320 date has been argued only for the basilica of Santi Marcellino e Pietro on the Via Labicana. J. Guyon, "La topographie et la chronologie du cimetière 'inter duos lauros,'" in J. G. Deckers et al., *Die Katakomben "Santi Marcellino e Pietro." Repertorium der Malereien*, Roma sotterranea Cristiana VI, Textband (Vatican-Münster, 1987), 91–131. Also see, R. Krautheimer, *Profile of a City* (Princeton, 1980), 21–28; G. T. Armstrong, "Constantine's Churches," *Gesta* 6 (1967), 1–9.

⁶³ *Vita*, iii, 41–43, 101.7–102.22.

⁶⁴ *Vita*, iii, 43, 102.8–12. This is most likely a reference to Matt. 24. This passage related not only Jesus' preaching to the apostles on the Mount of Olives, but also the prophecy of the destruction of the Temple.

⁶⁵ For the interesting suggestion that the narrative of the True Cross developed in association with the placement of the monumental jeweled cross on Golgotha, H. Goussen, *Über Georgische Drucke und Handschriften: Die Festordnung und der Heiligenkalender des altchristlichen Jerusalem* (Munich, 1923), 32.

⁶⁶ See above, note 46.

⁶⁷ Ambrose, *De obitu Theodosii oratio*, PL 16, cols. 1462B–65B; Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, II.1, 226–32. For a discussion of the texts, see J. W. Drijvers, *Helena Augusta: Waarheid en Legende* (Groningen, 1989) [my thanks to Leonard Rutgers for his translation of the Dutch text], and S. Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross Was Found* (Uppsala, 1991).

⁶⁸ *Itineraria Egeriae*, 37, 81.24–25.

⁶⁹ *Vita*, iii, 41–43, 101.7–102.22.

gruity of the Holy City being subordinated to Caesarea: "Since prevailing custom and ancient tradition have established that the bishop of Aelia [Jerusalem] should be honored, let him have the succession of honor, yet protecting the domestic right of the metropolis [Caesarea]." ⁷⁰ In his disputes with Acacius, bishop of Caesarea, Cyril of Jerusalem made explicit claims for the primacy of Jerusalem on the conventional grounds that his bishopric was an apostolic see. ⁷¹ But just as the invention of martyrs' relics by St. Ambrose later helped him consolidate the privileges of the bishop in Milan, Jerusalem's possession of the True Cross and other artifacts of the passion contributed to the legitimization of that see's ambitions. ⁷² Spurious or not, Cyril's letter to Constantius recording a vision of the cross in the sky also bespeaks episcopal claims for the divine sanction of Jerusalem's privileged position. ⁷³

In 415, the relics of the protomartyr Stephen were discovered just outside the walls of Jerusalem, and in 452 the head of John the Baptist was also revealed. ⁷⁴ Contemporaneously, through the stratagems of Juvenal, bishop of Jerusalem from ca. 422 to 458, Jerusalem realized a dramatic increase in episcopal status. At the so-called Robber Council of Ephesus in 449, Jerusalem gained a rank above its former metropolitan, Caesarea, rivaling in power the metropolitan of Antioch. ⁷⁵ Soon after, at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 and by the revolt of Palestinian monks which followed it, Juvenal was theologically and politically humiliated. The bishop depended on the support of Pope Leo of Rome to salvage something of his recently achieved status. Leo's letters acknowledge the power that Jerusalem's holy shrines might exert in the doctrinal disputes that enmeshed Juvenal's metropolitan pretensions. More tellingly, at the end of a letter elaborating this point, Leo mentions a gift sent to him by Juvenal: "I received with ven-

eration a small fragment of the Lord's cross together with the eulogia of your Charity." ⁷⁶ Again, the special relationship with the divine enjoyed by Jerusalem and, through extension, its bishop, is materially reified.

Thus the construction of the Easter liturgy and baptism as a spectacle of sacred history had significant political implications. The increased veneration of the memoriae of Jesus was both incorporated in and promoted by church ritual. The memoriae not only made Jerusalem the center of pilgrimage, but also the locus of increased episcopal authority. Greatest among the relics was the empty tomb of the resurrection, and by extension the ecclesiastical complex with which it was associated. Pilgrims' accounts trace the evolution of its veneration. In the Bordeaux pilgrim's itinerary, the Holy Sepulcher is prominent among the few sites which are described rather than simply listed, but it is not accorded particular primacy in its position in the order of the text, the amount of space allocated to it, or the terms of its description. In contrast, from the late fourth century onward, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher is accorded a privileged place in almost all accounts. ⁷⁷ Only after the reauthorization of the Dome of the Rock as the Templum Christi by the Crusaders in the twelfth century is the Holy Sepulcher displaced as the first object of pious homage in the Christian itinerary of Jerusalem. ⁷⁸

Jerusalem provides a late antique model for the syncretism of locus, ritual, and belief in the construction of spiritual and political power. Both Constantine's moral authority and his administrative control were legitimated by his patronage of the cathedral of the city and by his and his mother's association with the discovery of the most im-

⁷⁰ Mansi, II, col. 672.

⁷¹ Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, PG 67, IV.25, col. 1196A.

⁷² E. Dassmann, "Ambrosius und die Märtyrer," *JbAC* 18 (1975), 49–67, connects the invention of relics with Ambrose's conflicts with the Arians and the Arian members of the imperial family.

⁷³ PG 33, cols. 165A–176A. On the question of the authenticity of this letter, W. Telfer, ed. *Cyril of Jerusalem and Nestorius of Emesa*, Library of Christian Classics 4 (Philadelphia, 1955), 199, note 25.

⁷⁴ P. Peeters, *L'Orient et Byzance: Le tréfonds oriental de l'hagiographie byzantine* (Brussels, 1950), 53–58.

⁷⁵ E. Honigsmann, "Juvenal of Jerusalem," *DOP* 5 (1950), 209–79.

⁷⁶ This sentence is included in three of the nine main manuscripts. *Leonis papae Epistolae*, PL 54, cols. 1103–10, letter 139. Letters 109 and 113 also allude to the didactic value of the holy sites of Palestine.

⁷⁷ E.g., St. Jerome's description of Paula's visit to the Holy Land in his ep. 108 of 404 to Eustochium, *Epistulae*, CSEL 55 (1912), 306.1–351.8. Rufus' life of Peter the Iberian, written ca. 500, *Petrus der Iberer*, ed. and trans. R. Raabe (Leipzig, 1895), 32/27. Wilkinson's selection in *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 57–58, of a later passage in the narrative for translation is somewhat misleading. In it Peter is criticized for not visiting the Holy Sepulcher, but this is some while after his initial veneration of the church. *Breviarius*, ed. R. Weber, 109–12.

⁷⁸ H. Busse, "Vom Felsendom zum Templum Domini," in *Das Heilige Land im Mittelalter: Begegnungsraum zwischen Orient und Okzident*, ed. W. Fischer and J. Schneider (Neustadt, 1982); S. Schein, "Between Mount Moriah and the Holy Sepulchre: The Changing Traditions of the Temple Mount in the Later Middle Ages," *Traditio* 40 (1984), 175–95.

portant relics of Christendom.⁷⁹ The bishops of Jerusalem, in their turn, promoted their church by its unique topographical potential to elide the distance between the human and divine through spatial proximity. The centrality of the rite of initiation to these projects makes it unlikely that the baptistery of the Holy Sepulcher was a small room with a minute font set in the courtyard of the patriarchal apartments. Whatever the form and specific location of the original Constantinian baptistery, its prominence would seem to be dictated by its ideological significance.

The social and political importance of the martyrial function of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher has obscured its congregational origins and remodeled its history. Particularly in late antiquity,

a period in which analogical thinking elided differences between the spiritual and material worlds, the animated "thingness" of the holy exerted a powerful emotional force.⁸⁰ This sense of the site as the material anchor of the divine not only pervades all premodern Christian accounts of the city, but has asserted a remarkable control over modern discussions of its monuments. The study of the location of the baptistery reveals the congregational function of the complex, allowing the exploration of the monument's history from a new perspective, a perspective from which the politics of architecture might be more clearly witnessed.

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⁷⁹For the Holy Sepulcher's absorption of the sanctity of the Jewish Temple, R. Ousterhout, "The Temple, the Sepulchre, and the Martyrion of the Savior," *Gesta* 29.1 (1990), 44–53.

⁸⁰The material character of spirituality has perhaps been most thoroughly explored by P. Brown, in such works as *The Cult of the Saints* (Chicago, 1981), and *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York, 1988).